

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

LISTING OF CLAIMS IN THE CASE:

The following listing of claims replaces all previous versions.

1-27. (Cancelled)

28. (New) A computer-implemented method of processing an electronically placed order that requires valid configuration and approval, said method comprising:

receiving an electronically placed order comprising a first valid product configuration, wherein validity of product configuration is based on rules that change over time;

accepting an approval for the order regardless of whether said order is still a valid configuration if less than a pre-determined period of time has expired between said receiving the order and said approval for the order;

after said accepting said approval, determining that said first product configuration is invalid due to changes to said rules;

after said determining, receiving a second valid product configuration that complies with said rules with said changes; and

maintaining said acceptance of said approval after said receiving the second valid product configuration, wherein processing of said order is completed based on said approval that was received prior to said receiving said second valid configuration.

29. (New) The method of Claim 28, wherein said accepting the approval comprises accepting said approval at a time when said first product configuration is invalid due to said changes to said rules.

30. (New) The method of Claim 28, further comprising rejecting said order if more than the pre-determined period of time has expired between said receiving the order and the approval and if said first product configuration is invalid due to changes to said rules.

31. (New) The method of Claim 28 further comprising altering a parameter specifying said pre-determined period of time.

32. (New) The method of Claim 28 wherein said pre-determined period of time is based on an expected amount of time for said order to be approved.

33. (New) The method of Claim 28 wherein said pre-determined period of time is based on a rate at which said rules change.

34. (New) The method of Claim 28 wherein said electronically placed order further comprises fields for required order processing information.

35. (New) The method of Claim 34 wherein said accepting the approval is conditioned upon determining whether all said required order processing information has been provided.

36. (New) The method of Claim 35 wherein said accepting the approval is further conditioned upon determining whether all said required order processing information is valid.

37. (New) The method of Claim 34 wherein said receiving the electronically placed comprises allowing said order to proceed without all said required order processing information.

38. (New) The method of Claim 28 wherein said receiving the order comprises receiving said order via an Internet.

39. (New) A computer readable medium having stored thereon program instructions for implementing a method for processing customer orders, said method comprising:

receiving an electronically placed order comprising a first valid product configuration, wherein validity of product configuration is based on rules that change over time;

accepting an approval for the order regardless of whether said order is still a valid configuration if less than a pre-determined period of time has expired between said receiving the order and said approval for the order;

after said accepting said approval, determining that said first product configuration is invalid due to changes to said rules;

after said determining, receiving a second valid product configuration that complies with said rules with said changes; and

maintaining said acceptance of said approval after said receiving the second valid product configuration, wherein processing of said order is completed based on said approval that was received prior to said receiving said second valid configuration.

40. (New) The computer readable medium of Claim 39, wherein said accepting the approval in said method comprises accepting said approval at a time when said first product configuration is invalid due to said changes to said rules.

41. (New) The computer readable medium of Claim 39, wherein said method further comprises rejecting said order if more than the pre-determined period of time has expired between said receiving the order and the approval and if said first product configuration is invalid due to changes to said rules.

42. (New) The computer readable medium of Claim 39, wherein said method further comprises altering a parameter specifying said pre-determined period of time.

43. (New) A system for automatically processing an electronically placed order, comprising:

means for receiving an electronically placed order comprising a first valid product configuration, wherein validity of product configuration is based on rules that change over time;

means for accepting an approval for the order regardless of whether said order is still a valid configuration if less than a pre-determined period of time has expired between said receiving the order and said approval for the order;

means for determining that said first product configuration is invalid due to changes to said rules after said accepting said approval;

means for receiving a second valid product configuration that complies with said rules with said changes after said determining; and

means for maintaining said acceptance of said approval after said receiving the second valid product configuration, wherein processing of said order is completed based on said approval that was received prior to said receiving said second valid configuration.

44. (New) The system of Claim 43, wherein said means for accepting the approval comprises means for accepting said approval at a time when said first product configuration is invalid due to said changes to said rules.

45. (New) The system of Claim 43, further comprising means for rejecting said order if more than the pre-determined period of time has expired between said receiving the order and the approval and if said first product configuration is invalid due to changes to said rules.

46. (New) The system of Claim 43, further comprising means for altering a parameter specifying said pre-determined period of time.